

Research 2017

## Study on Work Experience Programs in Free-Semester System

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This study basically aims to collect the data for analyzing the effectiveness of the work experience programs for free-semester system. The two main data for this study were the survey questionnaire on the effectiveness of participating in work experience programs from students, and the operation information of work experience programs from each school in 2017. The information for the work experience programs was collected from the career development support network "Ggoomgil" ([www.ggoomgil.go.kr](http://www.ggoomgil.go.kr)). Also, the authors conducted two experimental studies with the group that participated in work experience programs and the group that did not. Review on international case studies were helpful to propose some implications for improving work experience programs in Korea, and discussion on the work experience programs are expected to suggest some career education policy implications for bridging free and general semesters.

From March 2nd 2017 to August 31th 2017, it has been revealed that 38,374 of work experience programs were conducted for Korean elementary, middle, and high schools. The most type of workplace was public office and government-owned business, and the most type of activity was public speech and conversation with current workers. In case of work experiences for free-semester, the most type of workplace was also public office and government-owned business, and the most type of activity was field experience.

The data of the schools conducting free-semester and that of the schools that did not participate in free-semester system in the first semester of 2017 were compared to review the effectiveness of work experience programs and assess career maturity, level of happiness, and the school performance of students before and after participating in work experience programs. The result shows that free-semester system and participating in work experience programs were positive to increase the school performance, level of happiness, and career maturity. However, the satisfaction on work experience programs was critical to decide the result, and it means that the quality of work experience programs was more important than the students participate in work experience programs or not.

To analyze the effectiveness of work experience programs, the middle school students

who participated in work experience programs from college were set as experimental group, and the middle school students who did not participate in work experience programs but the most similar with experimental group were set as controlled group. The result shows that participating in work experience programs was helpful for the students in career exploration and career maturity. Specifically, participating in work experience programs was the most effectiveness in self-understanding, information search on job and career, planning on career, and the rational decision making on career development.

Reviewing on international case studies shows that Germany emphasizes the organic connectivity in educational system, such as the educational chain policy. Therefore, Germany encourages the horizontal and vertical linkage among the educational system, and the vocational qualification is emphasized for students to transit into the labor market. In Denmark, it is required for youth to participate in education and labor market, and the government intervenes in the educational transition period to lead the students to higher education or labor market more smoothly. Review on international case studies emphasized the linkage among government, community, and business, enhancing the role of career center outside of school system, diversifying of the ways to enter the school, improving the effectiveness of work experience programs, reinforcement of students' and parents' responsibility, and promoting the importance of participating in work experience program to the private companies and businesses.

The findings for improving work experience programs in free-semester system from this study are as followings: 1) expanding sustainable work experience programs, 2) supporting customized career and educational guidance, 3) improving core contents in work experience programs, 4) improving the quality of workplace to offer better work experience programs, 5) improving the managing condition of work experience programs, and 6) supporting parents' work experience programs as well as students'.